



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: Black Horse Shootists Club.

2. Type of Proposed Action:
Construct a shooting facility.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action: The club's proposed new facility will be inside the existing Great Falls Shooting Sports Complex, which is three miles north of Great Falls, Mont. GFSSC is approximately 942.37 acres off of Ryan Dam Road. Of the 942.37 acres, 582.37 are owned by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) and the remaining 360 acres is owned by GFSSC.

FWP: Township 21 North, Range 4 East, M.P.M.
Section 15: NW $\frac{1}{4}$; Section 16: NE $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$

GFSSC: Township 21 North, Range 4 East, M.P.M.
Section 15: NE $\frac{1}{4}$; Section 16: SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$

The proposed facility will be built on property owned by FWP and will be inside the red box in photo below. The other red lines are safe shooting zones of fire.



4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: The Great Falls Shooting Sports Complex sits on land owned by and leased from FWP.

5. Need for the Action(s):

The Black Horse Shootists club would like to build a safe and secure shooting facility that resembles an old western town for their cowboy action shooting with adjacent parking. There is no such cowboy action shooting facility close to Great Falls.

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

Provide a safe and secure shooting facility.

7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:

The proposed size of the entire project is 250 yards by 100 yards.

8. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):

The site is on FWP owned land leased to the Great Falls Shooting Sports Complex. Most of the land for this project is cropland farmed by a tenant farmer.

9. Description of Project: The project will consist of:

- Leveling a 250 by 65 yard lot for bays, an old western street and support buildings.
- Build nine shooting bays 60 feet by 90 feet with approximately 20 feet of berm around them for a safe shooting backstop.

- There will be one false-front building per bay. The town street will run the full 250 yards, east to west, with shooting bays on the north side and support buildings on the south side.
- Support buildings will be registration, storage, a meeting hall, general store, livery, bathrooms.
- Buildings will be supported by concrete pillars about 12 inches in diameter by 2 feet deep with an anchor to bolt to the buildings' wood supports. There will be two to four supports per false-front building.
- Support buildings will be built on top of the ground. The meeting hall may need to have a concrete foot poured.
- An access road will be built just north of the GFSSC gate. The access road will be about 25 yards long.

10. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction: None

11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups: See GFSSC webpage at <http://www.gfssc.net>. The complex is a membership only club with guests. It also is open at various times each month for public shooting.

12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement: Proposed action has been discussed and approved by the GFSSC board of directors.

13. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

14. Names, Address, and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:
Dave Farris, (406) 868-9737 (cell), (406) 727-7625 (home)

PART II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES

The proposed alternative A, alternative B and the no action alternative were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, paragraph 9 (Description of Project). Construction of a safe shooting facility.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** If this project is denied the complex will remain as an active shooting range without a cowboy action shooting facility. The range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

NONE. Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available or prudent.

List and explain proposed mitigating measures (stipulations): None

PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas.

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality			X		No	4
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

4. The proposed project would require the disturbance and removal of approximately 3.6 acres of cropland for the construction of the new old western-themed shooting range. The removal of the cropland would not change the overall diversity of native vegetation and other croplands in the area that wildlife use for forage and cover.

9. Because this shooting range is located on FWP-own property, a file search by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was requested. Results of the search revealed a low

likelihood that cultural properties will be impacted. Therefore, SHPO stated that a cultural resource inventory is unwarranted.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		
5. Human health				X		
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities			X			7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

7. The addition of an old western-themed shooting range will be a positive addition to the existing shooting range complex and would provide shooting enthusiasts with an additional recreational experience

PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed was complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The project being implemented is already on an existing range/alterd areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative. The Black Horse Shootists club's proposed alternative, to construct a safe cowboy action shooting facility by its members and the GFSSC board of directors. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the improvements as outlined in Part I, Para. 9.

PART V. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? NO

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? Individually, the proposed actions have minor impacts. However, it was determined that there are no significant or potentially significant cumulatively impacts. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no new hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative; therefore, an EIS is not required.

PART VI. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

EA prepared by:

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Date Completed: Aug. 12, 2013

Describe public involvement, if any:

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site announcing a 15-day public comment period, ending 5 p.m., Aug. 29.
Send comments to bauchly@mt.gov.